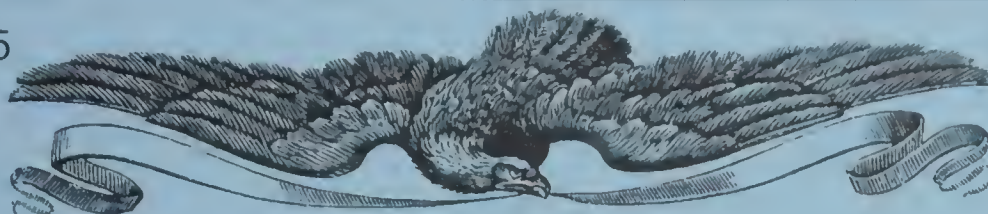

JOURNAL OF THE
BARBER COIN COLLECTORS' SOCIETY

Volume 15

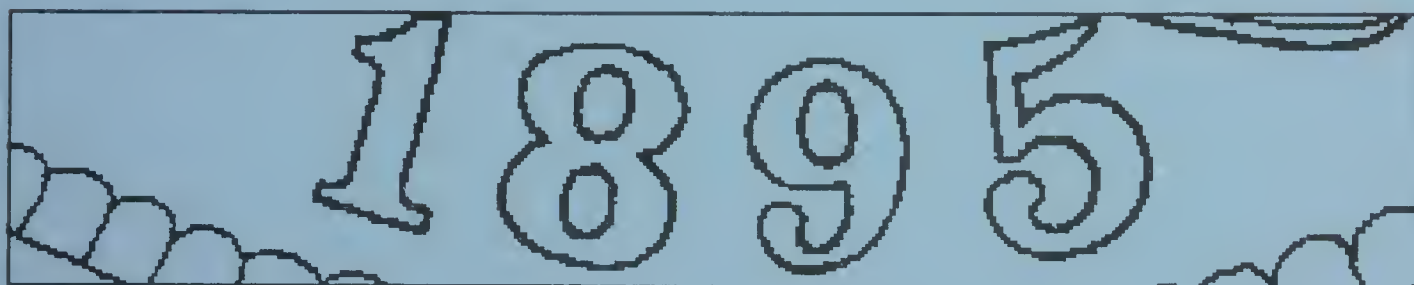
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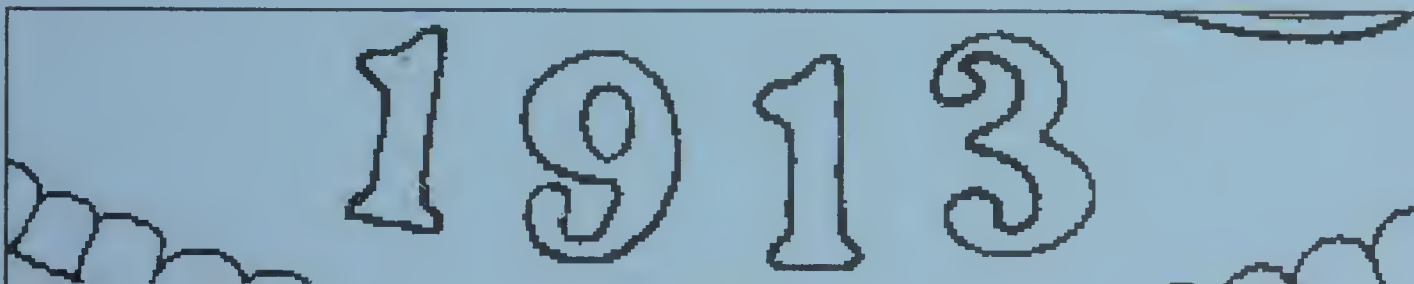
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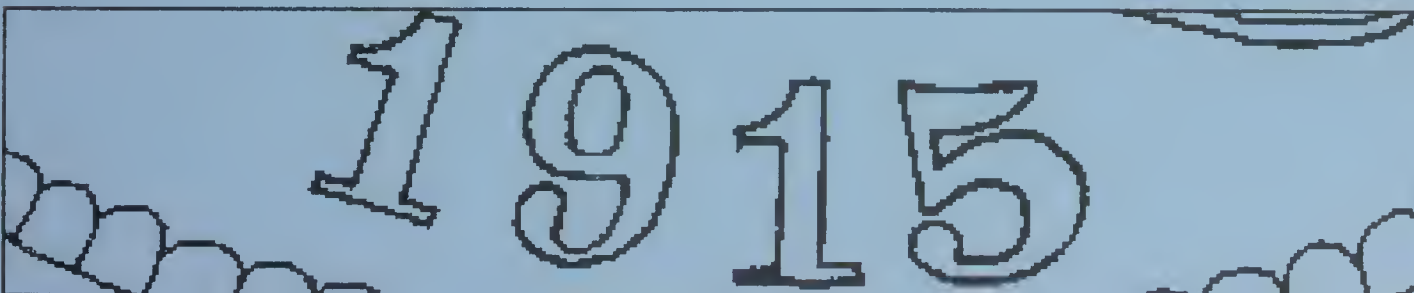
See pages 18-22



STYLE A: 1892 - 1900



STYLE B: 1903 - 1914



STYLE C: 1915 - 1916

Plates courtesy of Steve Hustad

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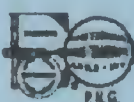
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JOURNAL OF THE
BARBER COIN COLLECTORS' SOCIETY

Founded in 1989 by Steve Epstein

OFFICERS

Philip Carrigan.....*President*
Eileen Ribar.....*Editor, BCCS Journal,*
Secretary/Treasurer
Steve Szczerbiak.....*Variety Coordinator*
Steve Hustad.....*Contributing Editor*

ADDRESSES

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BCCS PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I write this message near the start of the Memorial Day weekend and three weeks after the Central States (CSNS) convention held in Milwaukee. The Barber Society meeting held there was most interesting with six individuals attending (including one nonmember). We had an hour of informal and lively discussion. Included was the mention of a Barber Quarter grading set on the floor in the hands of a dealer. What—you don't think this is all that exciting? Well, the date of all the coins was 1901-S! I never saw the set but heard some coins were sold at the show. Note: our next meeting is the annual ANA Convention held in Pittsburgh and slated for August 21 at 9:00 AM.

Survey Findings

Near the end of last year, we all found a dues notice and a survey in the Journal. Eileen collected these and sent them my way for review and compiling. I've completed this rather neat task and am ready to report on these responses.

Compared to a local club, we don't 'know' our membership except for a willingness to pay dues and read our Journal. Some members have likely never met another member nor attended any BCCS gathering. They belong solely because of their interest in Barbers. This survey provides a profile of responding members' interests along with additional insight as to their needs and expectations. Presenting the survey data is a bit challenging, as we didn't force specific answers and may have allowed for some ambiguity in responses. Here is a summary of responses to the questions posed:

Number responding: 100 (Note: subsequent categories may total more due to multiple responses.)

Years collecting: 25+	70
10—24	24
0—10	5

Primary interest: collector	84
investor	1
both	11
dealer	2
reading	1

Collecting concentration:

U.S. other than Barbers	62
Foreign - Canada	10; Britain, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Spain, Austria and Paraguay

Other: currency, coin albums, literature, tokens

Non-numismatic: stamps, beach volleyball, other

Barber coinage: all series	40
5c	10
10c	32
25c	24
50c	33

Grade level desired:

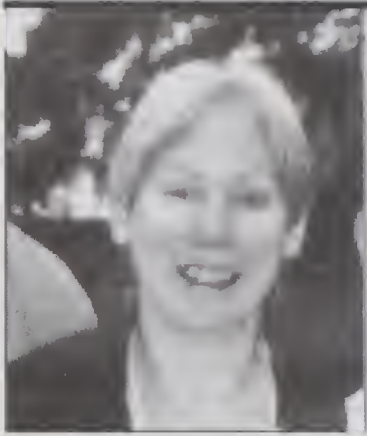
all	4
G-VG	5
F—VF	34
EF—AU	34
MS	15
Pf	3

Many survey respondents had high compliments for the quality of the Journal. They also cited topics of interest and suggestions for articles they enjoy and wish to see. One observation on collectors reporting a primary concentration in a series other than Barbers: this focus was usually in an earlier series such as Seated or Bust coins, or early copper.

Finally, although several individuals (a dozen) mentioned strong interests in articles on Barber varieties (e.g., overdates, doubling, etc.), a near equal number expressed disinterest in these areas.

In the next issue, I plan to provide a list of potential topics or subjects as suggested in the survey. I believe these will make interesting reading and hopefully stimulate writing interest.

Numismatic regards,
Phil Carrigan



BCCS EDITOR'S MESSAGE

“A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.” When it comes to collecting Barbers, it appears I’m in full agreement with this old saying. In light of their scarcity, my feeling is, when one becomes available, grab it. At present, the Ribar Barber Half collection has grown to four, all in AU. If it were left up to me, the holder would have many more in it. I’d be quite happy purchasing Fine, VF, Good and VG grade coins, my goal being to have a complete set of Barber Halves.

Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, depending on your viewpoint, I am not the collector in the family. My husband is and he, on the other hand, will pass up coin after coin because it is below the grade he has chosen as his criteria in deciding which coins to add to a collection. This practice has caused several heated discussions which resulted in our finally agreeing to disagree.

I concede that this is not a ‘right way/wrong way’ issue but rather two different points of view on completing a collection of a particular series of coins. Out of curiosity, I am posing this question to you. Do you feel it is better to buy a lower grade coin when it becomes available, or to pass it up in hopes that a higher grade will come along?

What’s your opinion?

THE JOURNAL NEEDS YOUR ARTICLES!

Remember your article submission(s) automatically enters you in the BCCS Literary Contest. The article receiving the most member votes will win a 1st place prize of \$50. Second place prize will be \$25 and third place will be a free one year BCCS membership. So, make sure your membership is up to date and get your article to Eileen at the post office or e-mail address on page 3.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE IS September 1st

Collecting Mint State (and Almost Mint State) Barber Half Dollars

By **Matthew A. Greene**

Since 1999, I have been putting together a collection of certified mint state (or nearly so) Barber half dollars. My goal is to assemble a set consisting of one coin for each year in which Barber halves were minted, 1892 through 1915. I currently have examples from 12 of those 24 years. (There are at present 13 Barber halves in my collection, but two are from 1899, the 1899-P and the 1899-S.) Since I am at the halfway point, I figured now would be a good time to chronicle my experiences in assembling a set of Barber half dollars.

Coin collecting is not a new hobby for me. I have been fascinated by coins since I was a child in Michigan during the 1960's. I loved looking at coins at J.L. Hudson's department store in downtown Detroit and at the coin shop in the Northland Mall. Twice I had modest collections of silver dollars, half dollars and various other coins. Unfortunately, I lost both of those collections to house burglars. During the mid-1980's, I again became interested in coins, but did not make any significant purchases because of the frequently large price differences from one grade of coin to another, and the apparent rampant over-grading of coins offered for sale.

By the late 1990's, I had both the desire and the resources to begin seriously collecting coins. In addition, the major third-party grading services, in business for several years, had eliminated at least a significant part of the risk of buying grossly over-graded coins.

When I first started buying coins in 1998, I was interested in putting together a nice type set of mint state coins from the 19th and 20th centuries. The first coin I purchased was an 1899-P Barber half. After buying several other coins, I realized that I was especially attracted to half dollars. They were large, they were 90% silver (at least the half dollars minted prior to 1965 were), and I remembered them fondly from the early 1960's when they circulated widely and when a half dollar was a lot of money for a kid.

Of all the half dollars, my favorite was the Barber half. There were three reasons why these coins attracted me. First, I liked their age. These half dollars were being minted when my grandparents were born, when Theodore Roosevelt was President, and when the Chicago Cubs last won the World Series. Second, I

liked the Barber half's lack of mass appeal. I enjoy collecting coins that are not sought after by every other collector. Third, and perhaps most important, I liked the design of the Barber half. Now, Barber half dollars in good, very good, and even fine condition are not, in my opinion, very attractive coins. Too many of the design features have been worn away. However, in high states of preservation, particularly in mint state, Barber halves can be extremely attractive and interesting coins.

The large portrait of Liberty is proud and stoic. When all of the details on Liberty's hair, ribbon, and tiara are present, you see a pleasingly intricate design. On the reverse the eagle, while somewhat misshapen, appears powerful, alert and ready to fight if necessary. On both the obverse and the reverse the artwork, while fully occupying the coin, is not cramped, and the 13 stars on each side of the coin are sharp and well-located. While I am certainly no art connoisseur, I do know what I like; and I liked the artwork on the Barber half. Having made my choice, I decided in 1999 to assemble a set of mint state Barber half dollars.

I would have loved to assemble a date and mint mark set of all 73 Barber halves in mint state. However, not having the \$100,000 plus that would be required to complete such a set with an average grade of MS-63, I decided on a more modest endeavor of a one-a-year set.

Although putting together a one-a-year set would be far less expensive than buying all 73 coins, I knew that assembling such a set would not be easy. Most coin shows, even large ones, offer few mint state Barber halves for sale. This is not surprising since there are not very many mint state Barber halves in existence, at least not that have been certified by either PCGS or NGC. As pointed out by Dr. Peter Shireman in his article in the January 2004 monthly supplement to the *Coin Dealer Newsletter*, only 12,142 Barber half dollars of all dates and mint marks had been certified in mint state by PCGS or NGC (as of August 2003 for PCGS and July 2003 for NGC). That is out of a total mintage of 135,916,201. That means that fewer than 1 out of every 11,000 Barber halves minted has been certified in mint state by either PCGS or NGC. No doubt the actual number of different Barber halves that have been certified in mint state is significantly lower than 12,142, as many coins have been submitted more than once.

While mint state Barber halves are hard to find, attractive examples are extremely difficult to locate. Over the last six years, I have attended over 200 coin shows, ranging from 40 to over 400 tables in size. In addition to attending shows, I have regularly visited the websites of two large coin dealers. At those shows and websites I have examined hundreds of certified mint state Barber halves. The large majority of those coins were unattractive, having one or more problems such as distracting marks and scratches in prime focal areas, weakness in the strike, and

ugly dull surfaces apparently caused by repeated dipping or worse.

I want only attractive Barber half dollars. However, I stay away from coins graded MS-65, the so-called “gems.” First, they are too expensive (on the average, 2.27 times as expensive as the same date and mint mark graded MS-64, according to the ask prices listed in the March 2004 monthly supplement to the *Coin Dealer Newsletter*). Second, they frequently appear to be over-graded. Very few of the certified MS-65 Barber halves I have examined are as attractive as the MS-64 examples or even the MS-63 examples I have purchased.

As I mentioned earlier, I bought my first Barber half, an 1899-P, when I was working on a type collection. I purchased it in March 1998 at the annual show of a local coin club. It was unslabbed and white. While it had obviously been dipped (what white Barber half has not been?), it was well-struck (as are all of the Barber halves currently in my collection), had nice luster and no bad marks, though it did have small abrasions on Liberty’s cheek and neck, and a mark on the shield on the reverse. I sent it to ANACS for grading a year later and it came back graded MS-61. That was fine with me, as I had paid a little under MS-60 money for the coin, but it did seem to be somewhat conservatively graded in light of many of the Barber halves I have since seen graded MS-63 or 64 by PCGS or NGC. Since my 1899-P was slabbed in 1999, it has toned a little near the rims.

It was more than a year after purchasing my first Barber half that I decided to put together a one-a-year set of the coins. Although I was happy with my first Barber half, I decided that in the future I would buy only examples certified by a major grading service. The cost of the coins was too high to gamble on whether a coin had been tampered with. Moreover, I wanted the opinion of a major grading service that the coin was indeed mint state.

In November of 1999 I bought my next Barber half at a local monthly show. It was an 1894-P, graded MS-64 by PGCS. It is a beautiful white coin with excellent luster. The reverse is flawless. The obverse has only a small speck on Liberty’s cap, and a couple of not-too-noticeable slide marks on her face.

Between April and August of 2000, I purchased three Barber halves that are no longer in my collection. Those were a 1912-D graded MS-64 by PCGS, an 1895-S graded MS-63 by PCGS, and a 1907-D also graded MS-63 by PCGS. Each of these coins had problems that, over time, convinced me to sell them. The 1912-D had a long hairline on Liberty’s neck and dip residue. Although the 1895-S had excellent luster and a very sharp strike, it had just too many nicks and abrasions. The 1907-D had a couple of flat stars on the obverse and weakness in the eagle’s right claw and in the arrow feathers. I traded the 1912-D to the same dealer from whom I had bought the 1894-P, and took a small loss. Later I sold him the 1895-S

at a small loss, and the 1907-D, on which I actually made five dollars.

The next coin in my collection was a 1915-S graded MS-62 by PCGS, which I purchased at a large regional show in June 2000. Why it was graded only MS-62 has remained a mystery to me. The obverse has golden light brown toning and brown specks in the field in front of Liberty, and somewhat darker brownish grey toning in the field in back of Liberty. There is one small reeding mark at the base of Liberty's neck and a couple of very small marks on her face and nose. The reverse is free of marks, with very light golden brown toning and good luster. This is an attractive coin.

In February 2001 at a show in St. Louis, I bought another Barber half that I have since sold. It was an 1896-O graded MS-63 by PCGS. As pointed out by Dr. Shireman in his above-referenced article, fewer mint state examples of the 1896-O have been certified by PCGS and NGC than of any other Barber half dollar (only 29 through July/August 2003). At the time I bought the coin, it was considered the second rarest mint state Barber half. I bought the 1896-O because of its great rarity. However, I soon grew dissatisfied with the coin. It had a dull surface and a typical New Orleans strike, in that it had some flat stars on the obverse and weakness in the eagle's right claw and arrow feathers. A year after I bought the 1896-O, I sold it to the same dealer who had bought my other Barber halves, for a price somewhat under what I had paid. It was a case of bad timing. Between the time I sold the coin and the end of that year, the Greysheet bid price increased by \$250.

At that same show in St. Louis in February 2001, I bought my first non-mint state Barber half. It was an 1899-S graded AU-58 by NGC. Although I already had a Barber half from 1899, I could not pass up this 1899-S. It is completely original with dark, chocolate brown toning, with no noticeable marks, and only a tiny bit of rub on Liberty's hair and nose. It is an accurately graded AU-58: a very attractive coin with just the faintest trace of circulation. Also, the price was attractive. I paid just five dollars over the Greysheet ask price for AU, and this was a very nice, original, AU-58.

While I originally intended to collect only mint state Barber halves, I was and remain happy to buy attractive, accurately graded AU-58 coins. They are often much more attractive than most MS-62 or 63 examples, at far lower prices, and it often requires a very close look to find any wear on these coins.

I bought my next Barber half in June 2002 at a large regional show. It was an 1896-P graded MS-63 by PCGS. It has nice medium brown toning on both sides, with blue-green gun metal toning on the obverse rims and fields. There are some very small abrasions and marks on Liberty, but you need a magnifier to see them. There is also a small rim nick above the space between the "R" and "U" in

“TRUST.”

Next, in July 2002, I found a beautiful 1895-P at the annual show of a local coin club. This coin, graded MS-63 by PCGS, has wonderful grey, brown, pinkish toning on both the obverse and the reverse. Around the rims on both sides is a beautiful blue-green gun metal toning. It has no distracting marks. In my opinion, this coin should be graded MS-64, if not MS-65. I am not complaining, mind you, as the Greysheet ask price for the 1895 in MS-64 is \$550 more than the ask price for the same coin in MS-63.

In January 2003, I found a 1901-P at a local monthly coin show. The coin was graded MS-62 by PCGS. It has a few very small marks on Liberty's face and cap. On the reverse, there are some very small marks on the shield. You cannot see any of the marks, on the obverse or reverse, without a magnifier. Its toning is a light grey-brown on both the obverse and the reverse, with nice luster under the toning.

In June 2003 I purchased my first Barber half via the Internet. In purchasing coins over the Internet, I buy only from a couple of large, well-known and well-respected dealers who allow you to return coins with no questions asked. The photo of the coin on the Internet invariably looks better than does the coin in person. The question is whether the actual coin looks enough like it does in the photo that you are willing to keep it. My first Barber half purchased over the Internet was an 1892-P graded MS-64 by NCG. It has a light brownish toning, nice luster and very few marks, and looks much like it did in the photo.

Also in June 2003, at a large regional show, I bought a 1911-P, graded MS-61 by NGC. I am not sure why I bought the coin, as it showed weakness of strike on a couple of the stars on the obverse, and had several hairlines. I ended up trading in this half a few months later.

In July 2003 I purchased another Barber half over the Internet. This was an 1893-P graded MS-64 by PCGS. In its photo, the coin looked fantastic. It had excellent luster, and grey toning that was darker around the rim on the obverse and lighter toward the center. The reverse was lightly toned in grey. When the coin arrived in the mail, I was disappointed to find hairlines and pinpoint nicks on Liberty's neck and cheek that could not be seen in the photograph. I thought long and hard about sending the coin back, but finally decided to keep it. In spite of the hairlines and nicks, it is a very attractive coin, taking into account its strike, luster and toning. I certainly wish the hairlines and nicks were not there, but the bottom line is that I like the coin. So does a major dealer in Barber coins to whom I showed the half a few months after I bought it. In his opinion, it certainly merited a grade of MS-64. That made me feel better about my decision to keep it.

I attended the ANA convention in Baltimore at the end of July 2003. Not surprisingly, this was my most productive show for finding Barber half dollars, as I left with three excellent additions to my collection.

The first was a 1907-D graded AU-58 by ANACS. This coin is beautifully original with no marks, light chocolate toning that includes some green, red and blue, and only very slight wear. The coin probably was in circulation for a week or two in 1907.

The second Barber half I purchased at the ANA convention was a 1912-D graded MS-64 by NGC. It has very nice luster, light to medium brown toning, and some minor marks on Liberty, including a little nick in her hair.

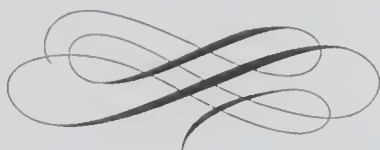
My third Barber purchase at last year's ANA summer convention was a 1903-O graded MS-64 by PCGS. This coin is beautiful. It has a very sharp strike, which is uncommon for New Orleans Barber halves. It has a couple of marks on Liberty, but nothing distracting. Like the 1896, it has nice medium brown toning on both sides, with blue-green gun metal toning on the obverse rims and fields. It also has blue-green toning around some of the rim on the reverse and very good luster under the toning on both sides.

I acquired the most recent addition to my collection of Barber half dollars at the Silver Dollar Roundtable in St. Louis in October 2003. It is a 1911-S graded MS-63 by NGC. It has nice medium brown toning, no marks on Liberty or on the reverse, and only a few very small marks in the field on the obverse. As part of the purchase price of this coin, I traded in the 1911-P half dollar that I had purchased four months earlier. Although I lost \$10 on the trade, I was happy. The 1911-S, in addition to having a much lower mint state population than does the 1911-P, is a much nicer coin.

So there they are, the 13 coins that currently comprise my collection of Barber half dollars: the 1892-P (NGC, MS-64); 1893-P (PCGS, MS-64); 1894-P (PCGS, MS-64); 1895-P (PCGS, MS-63); 1896-P (PCGS, MS-63); 1899-P (ANACS, MS-61); 1899-S (NGC, AU-58); 1901-P (PCGS, MS-62); 1903-O (PCGS, MS-64); 1907-D (ANACS, AU-58); 1911-S (NGC, MS-63); 1912-D (NGC, MS-64); and 1915-S (PCGS, MS-62). Ranging from AU-58 through MS-64, the average grade of the coins is 62.3. Every coin is well-struck and, in my opinion, attractive.

I am half way to acquiring all of the Barber halves I need for my collection. When buying coins I have not always been as choosy as I should have been. However, I believe I am like most coin collectors, in that I have gotten more discriminating over time. When I buy a Barber half now, it must be certified by a major grading service, it must be attractive (preferably toned) with few marks, and it must

be well struck. Working on the collection has been fun and challenging, albeit a little frustrating due to the difficulty of finding attractive mint state Barber halves. I look forward to continuing and completing my search because once it is finished I will have assembled a collection of very attractive, interesting and rare American coins.



BARBER BITS

Back in the early 1990's I endeavored to assemble a complete Barber Half P Mint set grading full Fine to VF-35. It took me about a year and I penned an article for the Journal which was published. I have recently decided to embark on a much more difficult challenge, completing the branch mint portion of the set. I have already found the '04-S, perhaps the key; a nice original FINE at a Greenville, SC show; also the '05-O.

What irks me, and I am sure many other BCCS members as well, is the blatant over-grading of this series by the majority of the dealers who handle these coins. I see coins that barely make a VF-20 being touted as XF's down to VG graded Barber halves with nary a letter in LIBERTY showing. If it were one or two bad apples I wouldn't be concerned, but the over-grading I see has reached epidemic proportions. Since certified coins usually surface with high-end XF or better pieces, those of us who prefer the greater challenge of finding mid-range Barbers have to depend on "raw" specimens and this seems to add to the problem.

Have you or Phil heard any feedback on this from other BCCS members?

Sincerely,
Arno Safran

Editor's note: Do you agree with Arno that over-grading is an all too common practice? If you would like to comment on Arno's letter or to share your own thoughts and/or personal experiences with over-grading, please send your response via email or the USPS to me for inclusion in the next issue.

BARBER BITS *continued*

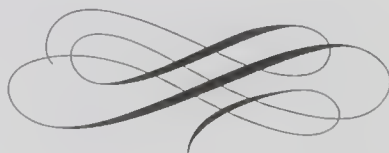
Below are excerpts from an article that appeared in an earlier Journal which relates to the topic of grading and which we feel will not only be of interest to our newer members, but to our seasoned members as well. They are taken from an article titled "Grading Barbers - Part I" by David Lawrence. Dave's observations and advice are invaluable to Barber collectors. The entire article can be found in the BCCS Journal Vol. 1, No. 2, Summer 1989, pp. 23-24.

"Barbers are one of the easiest series to grade, but like many U.S. coins, the 'strike' must be taken into consideration. Coins from the New Orleans Mint are almost always weakly struck. Other factors must be considered, too. For example, there was a master hub change for Barber Quarters in 1900 and the coins subsequent to this have a weaker band beneath Liberty than the early dates of the series. Also, Barber Halves before 1900 have stronger obverses than reverses. This is especially apparent in the Good-Fine grades."

"Coins wear continuously, not in discrete steps, and the different standard grades represent levels in the continuum. So-called 'split grades' are not a dealer device to rake in more money, but an attempt at greater precision. This is significant when the coin jumps greatly in price from one grade to the next.

When grading coins, rely on a written description. Illustrations can be helpful, but written criteria are more important because, too often, the coin one has in his or her hands doesn't look exactly like the figure. Photos are particularly difficult to work with because the angle and intensity of the lighting used greatly affects the details."

The American Numismatic Association's book, *Official A.N.A. Grading Standards for United States Coins*, is suggested for inclusion in every collector's personal reference library.



A Collector's Memories

By William N. Bragg

I began collecting coins in 1948 at the tender age of 13. My father had a modest collection of Lincoln Cents and my grandfather had an eclectic collection of coins, including some older and more valuable coins which he showed me on occasion. I had no money so I had no opportunity to collect myself, but my interest had been roused. The lack of opportunity changed when I obtained a paper route. One of the associated tasks was collection from the customers. Suddenly I had money and, more importantly, I had access to a steady flow of a variety of coins.

Soon I had beginning collections of Barbers, Indian Cents, Standing Quarters, Liberty and Buffalo Nickels in addition to the then current (at least in circulation) Walking Liberty Halves, Mercury Dimes, Washington Quarters and so forth. I had no real interest in grade, just in filling holes, and I enjoyed collecting. As I became older, I continued collecting everything, almost entirely from circulation, upgrading as I found better copies. This continued until I graduated from college and left home for the first time. I took my collection with me, but was not able to add significantly to it for a number of years (approximately 1959 to 1965). By then I was married and no longer actively collecting, but I did continue to examine coins that crossed my hand and put an occasional uncirculated roll away if I happened to get one from the bank.

In 1966 I moved west to California. My collection was taken with me, but remained in storage for several years. One day in the early 1970's, I was looking through some stuff and happened across it, found it interesting, and decided to pursue the hobby once again. I found a good coin dealer in the vicinity and for the next five or six years was quite active, this time purchasing coins rather than looking in circulation for them. I still was mostly interested in filling holes, but also attempted to get as good a grade as I could afford from among the available coins. However, I still actively collected "everything." This phase of my collecting experience ended around 1979 when the dealership changed character at the same time that I was experiencing financial difficulties, and the collection again went into storage, where it stayed for a little over ten years.

In the late 1980's, the collection again surfaced and I decided to become active once more. This time, however, I decided that by attempting to collect everything, my resources were spread too thinly to ever finish anything, so I concentrated on one series and made a real effort to complete it. By this time, most of my

coin series were complete except for a few keys. For example, my Liberty Walking Halves, Franklin Halves, Buffalo Nickels, Jefferson Nickels, Washington Quarters and Liberty Nickels were complete (except for overdates which I had decided not to collect) and several other series (Lincoln Cents, Indian Cents, Large Cents, Mercury Dimes, Morgan Dollars, Peace Dollars) were essentially complete but missing the keys. My Barbers, however, had significant gaps. I decided to concentrate on the Barbers, partly because the Halves were comparatively inexpensive, and partly because I liked the series.

My initial push was to complete the Barber Half collection. I confidently looked up five or six dealers in my area and visited their shops to purchase Barber Halves. I could not find any! That is, almost all the dealers had Barber Halves, but all had the same dates (common ones that I had picked up from circulation years before). Furthermore, almost all were G/AG in grade (Good obverse but an About Good reverse). I had decided to strive for better grades by this time so, while I would accept such coins, I would have preferred VG to Fine (or at least a full-rim Good). In the ensuing two years or so, I found a few new dates for my collection but these finds were rare, and most of the coins were in low grade. This was my introduction to the actual scarcity of Barber survivors.

I finally discovered the Long Beach Coin Shows and there, for the first time, I actually found Barbers for sale. Still, it took me several years to complete the Barber Half collection, at which time I started on the Quarters. I purchased the “completing” Barber Half at the Long Beach show, and the dealer introduced me to the BCCS which I quickly joined. This membership has been very helpful in realizing the rarity of the coins and the relative scarcity of specific issues, as well as alerting me to varieties and so forth. I also thoroughly enjoy reading the Journal.

I decided to collect the Quarters in VF or better, a fateful decision in view of the rarity of some of them! I found that finding VF Barber Quarters is easier said than done, and that frequently they are harder to obtain in VF than in higher circulated grades. The result is that my collection of Quarters averages XF rather than VF, but ranges from VF to Uncirculated.

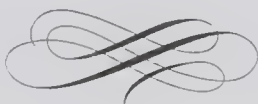
My observation is that the rarest non-“big three” Quarter in high circulated grade is the 1909-O. Based on advertised examples, it almost seems to rival the 1901-S in such grades. I have seen more 1913-S coins, and many more 1896-S coins advertised in such grades than 1909-O’s. The few ‘09-O’s I have seen advertised are usually priced at least twice the *Coin World Trend* values current at the time. This is the only Quarter other than the “big three” that I do not have in VF or better (mine is only Fine). I had a chance to purchase one (VF) from David Lawrence several years ago, but held out for a higher grade coin. He told me that I would not find one and, so far at least, he was right! In late 1997 I thought I had found one,

but fate was against me. The Winter issue of the BCCS Journal contained an advertisement for Barber Quarters which included an XF-45 1909-O at a reasonable price. I jumped at it, was informed over the phone that it was still available, and told the advertiser that I would send him a check the next day, which I did. He later informed me that the coin in question was stolen from his car while he was waiting for my check to clear! He refunded my money and we both lost out.

Another hard date in the Quarter series is the 1897-S. I attended several major shows before I finally located one. I now have two, having upgraded the initial one (VF) to my current copy (XF). Interestingly enough, the two represent two of the three mintmark positions illustrated in Dave Lawrence's excellent book on the series so are not, strictly speaking, duplicates.

Finances make it difficult to justify purchasing one of the "big three" Quarters in high-circulated grade, but my observation is that they are available if one is willing to spend the money. I bid on a 1913-S several years ago, submitting a mail bid with an automatic 10% increase should it be needed. At the time, the Trend value of the coin at the grade (VF) was, if I remember correctly, about \$1500, so I bid \$1600 figuring I would get the coin. I did not. The coin sold for a minimum bid over my 10% increase. Following this auction, the Trend value immediately went up to reflect the price paid. For the time being at least, I have given up on ever owning one of the "big three" in VF or better, and refuse to compromise the overall quality of my Quarter set by purchasing low-grade examples just to fill the holes, so my Quarter collection is about as complete as it's ever likely to get unless, of course, I am able to obtain the elusive 1909-O.

Stymied on the Quarters, and now really appreciative of the beauty of the Barber design in high grade, I decided to work on a high circulated grade collection of Barber Halves (aiming this time for XF or better). This series is "user friendly" in that there are no super keys which are priced out of a reasonable possibility of ever obtaining them (that is, if one ignores the 1892-O, Micro O, which is virtually unobtainable). Sensibly, I began with the rarest issues in the series and am working from there. I was fortunate to locate a number of the key and semi-key coins early in the game so I now have about half the series in XF or better, including all but one of those rated Rarity 4 or higher by both the BCCS rarity list and David Lawrence in his book on the series. I do not know whether I will ever complete the set because my situation is again not conducive to purchasing a lot of coins, but I am plugging away at it, a coin or two a year, and enjoying doing so.



Hub Types, Logotypes & Mintmarks – Part 2

By **Steve Hustad**

I hope you all found my article on Barber Dime hub types in the previous issue useful. This short series is intended as somewhat of a ‘back to basics’ look at some frequently overlooked and changing characteristics within the various Barber series of coins that we all love so much.

Too often, while consumed with date and mint collecting, mint state piece ‘fascinations,’ or Barber type coin pursuits, we can too easily lose sight of some of the more subtle changes that have occurred during the coinage run of these coins. Sure, we all know what these coins look like from AG-3 all the way up to MS-70 (well, okay, I couldn’t reliably tell an MS-70 from a MS-65 if my life – or life savings depended on it, which it too often would!), but when it comes down to identifying why that 1915 dime looks “different” from that 1895 piece, well...

This time, we’ll continue with the Dime series, but illustrate the different date punch logo type styles.

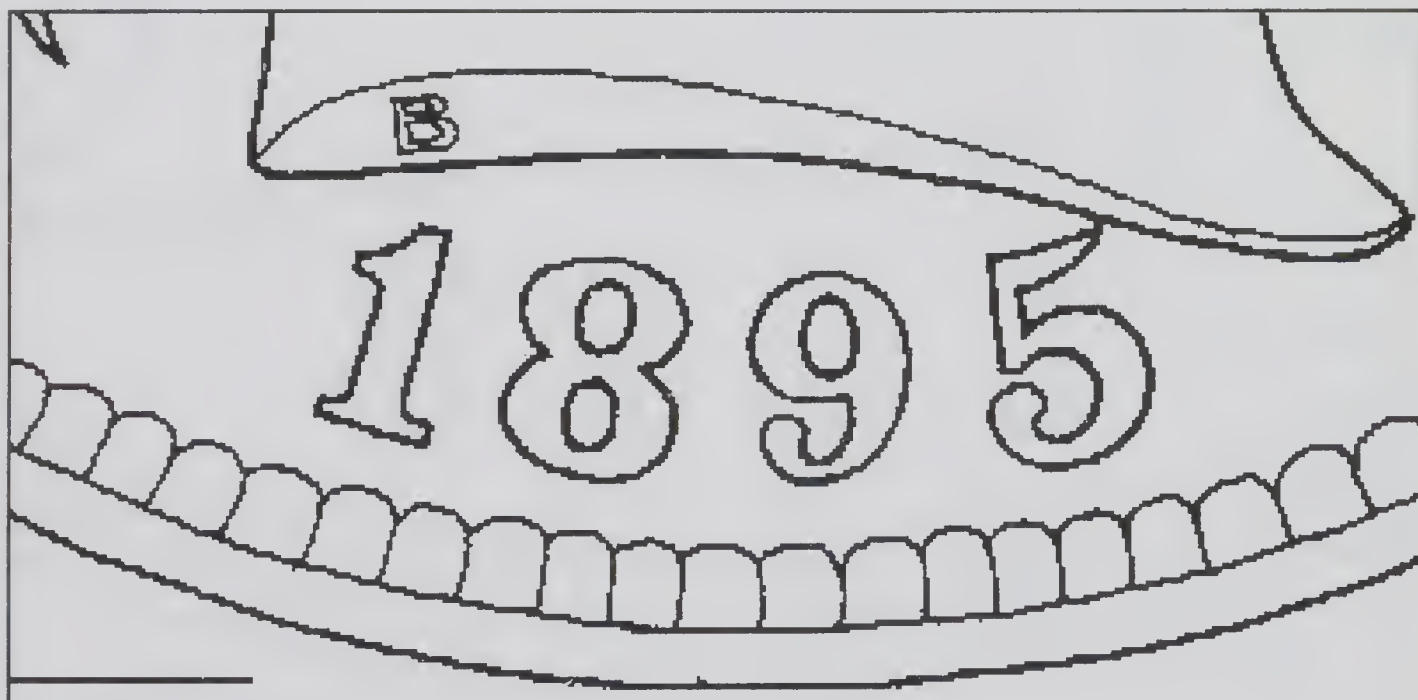
“Next issue: Hub types for the Barber quarter series.” Yeah, I know...okay. I had second thoughts about the article series sequencing, and felt that dealing with each denomination by itself might flow better. We’ll see, I guess! So, forging ahead...

When the Barber dime, quarter and half series were introduced in 1892, they utilized the same date punches that the Liberty Nickel and Indian Head cent series had already been using for quite some time. This was changed three times in the life of the dime series (oddly, more often in the quarter and half-dollar runs, but that’s a future article).

I think that noticing these small differences in these series really adds to the ‘spice’ of collecting. The Barber series of coins hold a lot more fascination and variety than they are generally given credit for. And it’s time that they got their due!

The first date plate: 1892 - 1902 (shown as 1895), illustrates what I'm calling "Style A" and shows the size and style of logotype punches used from inception through and including the 1902 minted pieces.

This style is typical of late nineteenth century mint logotype punches, also showing up in the previous Liberty Seated silver coins. The style's characteristics include squared off serifs to the 1s, open 6s & 9s, and so on. These figures are also large compared to what comes later. There is a possible overlap with the next style in some 1902 dated pieces, but that's yet to be confirmed.



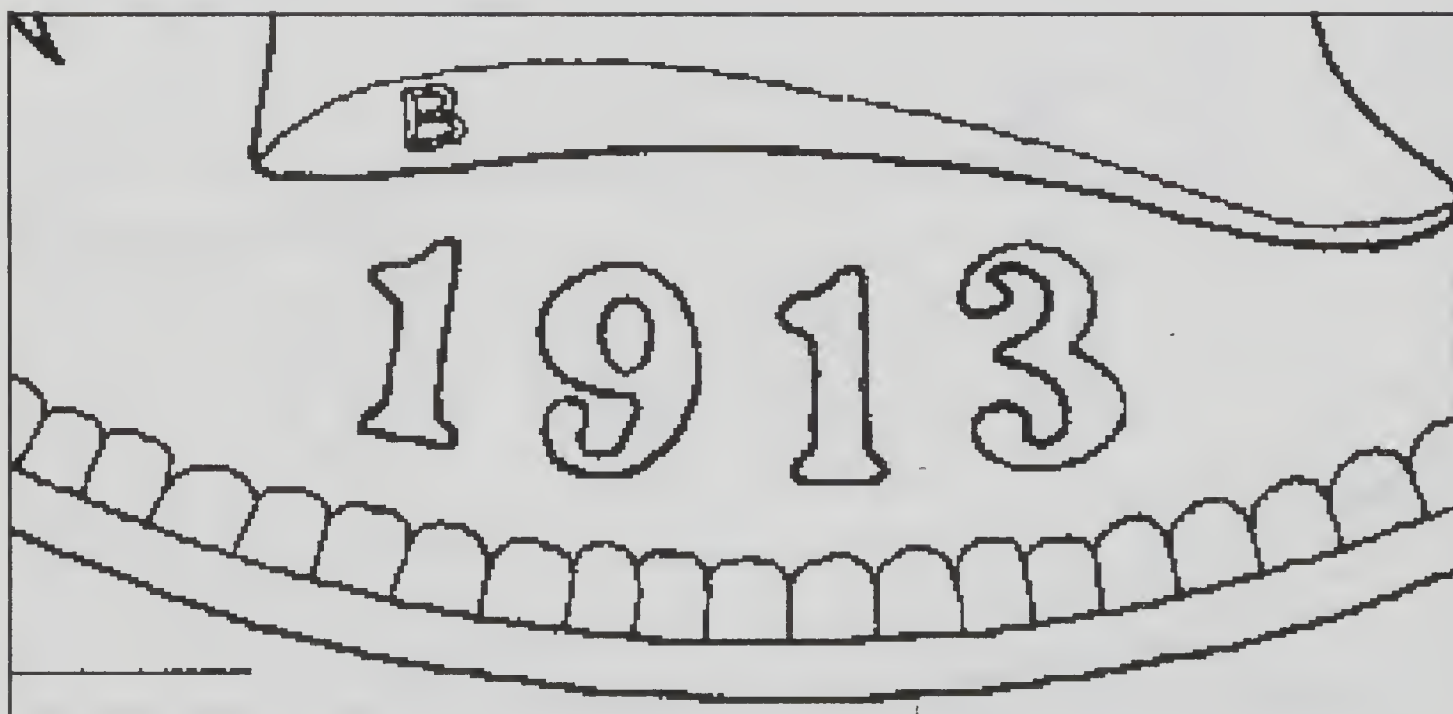
Style A 1892 - 1902

1. Style similar to previous years with squared-off serifs to the 1's, open 9's, etc.
2. Large size figures.

Possible overlap with style "B" in 1902 - unconfirmed.

The second date plate: 1903 – 1914 (shown as 1913), illustrates what I'm calling "Style B," and shows the size and style use in the series mid to late years.

The numerals are now noticeably thicker with more rounded serif tips and nearly closed loops to the 6s & 9s. Also, these date numerals are shorter/smaller than previous – compare with the 1902 dated pieces. No overlap known with following style, but as noted above, overlap is suspected with style A in 1902.



Style B 1903 - 1914

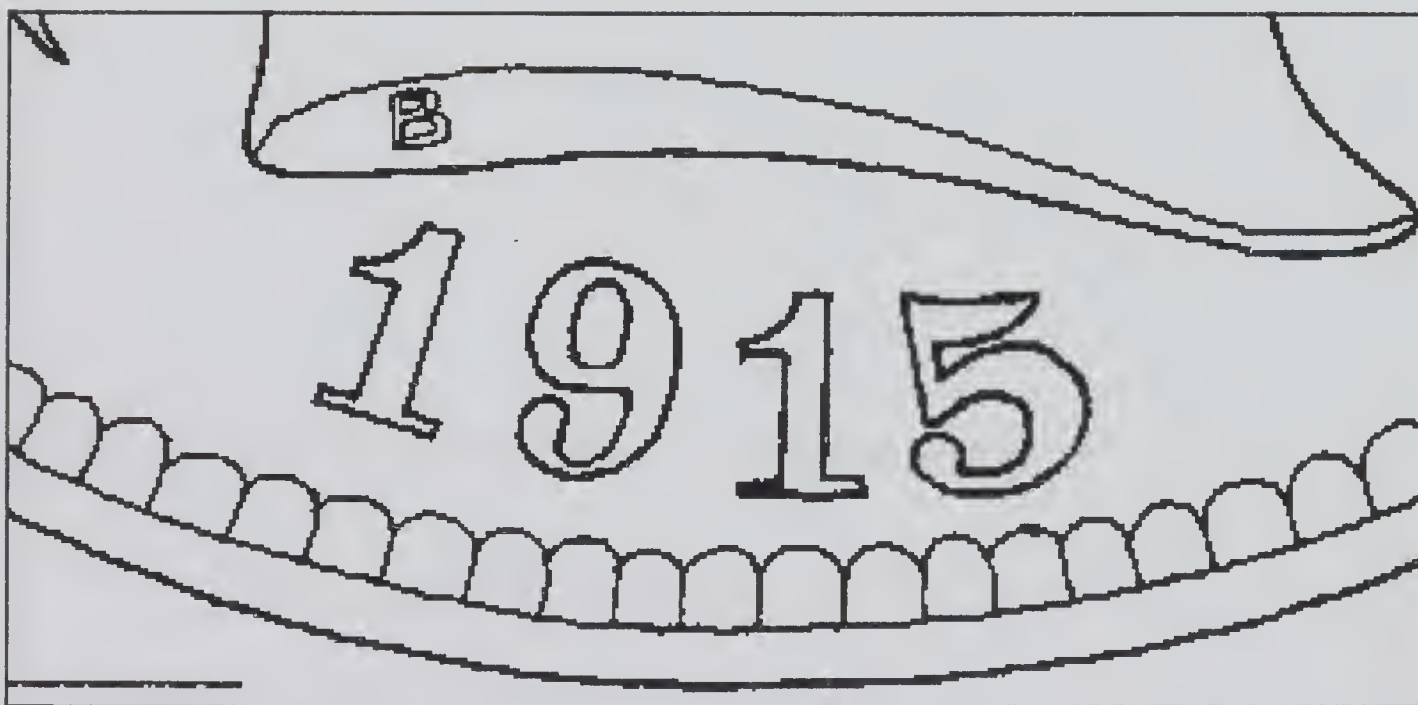
1. Numerals now “fatter” and thicker proportionally; more rounded serifs; nearly closed loops to 9’s and 6’s.

2. Size reduced slightly - compare with 1902 pieces.

Possible overlap with style “A” in 1902 - unconfirmed.

The third date plate: 1915 & 1916 (shown as 1915), illustrates what I'm calling "Style C," and illustrates the last two years of the series logotypes used. Why the change, I wonder? With two years to go in the series (though the mint workers may not have known that), why make such an obvious and dramatic change? Who knows? But I'm glad they did because it give us collectors and enthusiasts more to collect and ponder.

This final style is more exaggerated and crude in my opinion. Serifs are long, narrow and large. The serifs on the 1s, 6s and 9s are 'bulbous.' Size is increased over Style B. There are no known 1914 or earlier pieces utilizing this style.



Style C 1915 and 1916

1. Figures are more exaggerated and crude. Serifs are narrow and long on 1's. 6's and 9's are bulbous.

2. Size increased; a bit larger than style "A."

No other dates of this style noted

Next issue – Barber Dime mintmark types and how to identify them. (No REALLY! - this time I won't change it!)

Happy collecting!

Errata: An astute reader of my last article on the hub types, member **Jim Smith**, kindly related some additional information on dime hub type overlaps to add to the listing I'd provided. Jim writes:

Issue Vol. 15 # 1 page 8.

In addition to the Rev. pairings indicated in the article, I have the following:

1902-S Type I Rev. -- 1 piece 163

1904-S Type I Rev. -- 1 piece 90

1905-S Type I Rev. -- 2 pieces 120

Thank you, Jim!



Special Offer for BCCS Members

Glenn Church has generously donated 5 slightly used Eagle notebook style certified coin storage albums to BCCS as a fund raiser. PCGS, NGC, and PCI holders all fit in the album pockets. Each of the brown plastic, leatherette-like books has three sturdy hard plastic pages. Each page has 9 pockets and allows the coins to be viewed from both sides. These albums sell for \$24.95 new. We are making these available to members for **\$10 each plus postage**.

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